

## Office Support Professional

### Series:

- GS-0303 — Miscellaneous Clerk and Assistant**
- GS-0318 — Secretary**
- GS-0322 — Clerk-Typist**
- GS-0326 — Office Automation Clerical and Assistance**
- GS-0342 — Support Services Assistance**
- GS-0344 — Management and Program Clerical and Assistance**

Applicable to employees in the following series who perform office support functions:

- GS-0203 — Human Resources Assistant**
- GS-0503 — Financial Clerical and Assistance**

Office Support Professional (OSP) is a relatively new term in the Department for Civil Service employees serving in a wide range of support and assistant positions including secretaries, office managers, program, budget, human resources, office, administrative, and staff assistants.

OSPs need expertise in the technical aspects of their positions but are also expected to have outstanding interpersonal

and communication skills. Therefore, you will find suggestions for courses and training opportunities for all of these areas. It is important to view this course list as one part of the career development process, with assignments and on-the-job experience completing the structure.

As with all occupational families, you, as an OSP, may have very different training requirements at the same time, regardless of your grade level or years of service. For example, you may be at an advanced technical level while having writing skills that are more basic. Therefore, there is a great deal of flexibility built into this Training Continuum. Many courses are included at several different levels so that you may choose your courses by what you wish to learn rather than being constrained by any other requirements.

The Career Development Resource Center (CDRC) is an excellent source for both career advice and information. The CDRC can advise you on a variety of career development issues, including writing an IDP. Consulting with the CDRC and using this Training Continuum can be of significant assistance to you in career planning.

## Technical Competencies

The Department's subject matter experts have identified the following specific technical competencies to assist employees and managers in determining competency levels and staff development needs.

**Customer Service** - Adjusts priorities to respond to pressing and changing client demands; anticipates and meets the needs of clients; achieves quality end products; is committed to continuous improvement of services.

**Decisiveness** - Exercises good judgment by making sound and well informed decisions in a timely manner; consults with others as appropriate before implementing decisions.

**Flexibility** - Is open to change and new information; adapts behavior and work methods in response to new information or conditions.

**Interpersonal Skills** - Considers and responds appropriately to the needs, feelings, and capabilities of different people in different situations; is tactful and treats others with respect.

**Oral Communication** - Makes clear and convincing oral presentations to individuals and groups; listens effectively and clarifies

information as needed; fosters an atmosphere of open communication.

**Problem Solving** - Identifies and analyzes problems; distinguishes between relevant and irrelevant information to make logical decisions; provides solutions to individual and organizational problems.

**Technical Credibility** - Knowledgeable in word processing, spreadsheets, presentation software; learns new software applications and teaches others; uses and maintains administrative systems; formats all Department correspondence accurately; manages all official records according to Department standards.

**Written Communication** - Drafts, proofreads, edits and finalizes reports, memos, correspondence, cables, Congressionals and 7th floor correspondence; expresses facts and ideas in writing in a clear, convincing, and organized manner.

## Office Support Professional: Basic Level

Entering personnel learn the basic technical skills and knowledge needed to succeed as an OSP in the two-week PK104 - Office Support Professionals Training for Entering Personnel. While designed for new employees, this course will also benefit more experienced OSPs in the Department who have a need to “fill in the blanks” in some skill and knowledge areas.

PK104 students are assessed on their basic written and oral communication skills. They receive additional course recommendations based on their individual

needs. OSPs are encouraged to take the recommended courses within six to twelve months after completing PK104. Students are also encouraged to review the School for Applied Information Technology (SAIT) curriculum and register for relevant information technology courses.

Basic level OSPs should develop professional goals for their State Department careers. Within six months of beginning work at the Department, new OSPs should visit the Career Development Resource Center (CDRC) to familiarize themselves with the services, and to learn about available career and training opportunities and options within the Department of State.

	Recommended Courses	Suggested Courses
<b>Basic Level</b>	<p><b>Orientation</b></p> <p>PN125 Orientation for Civil Service Employees (for new State Department employees)</p> <p>PS800 Cyber Security Awareness (distance learning; required to use OpenNet Plus)</p> <p><b>Office Management</b></p> <p>PK104 Civil Service Office Support Professionals Training for Entering Personnel</p> <p>PK143 Proofreading</p> <p>PK195 Travel Preparation and Regulations (distance learning)</p> <p>PK205 Travel Documents Processing–Automated</p> <p>PK207 Files Management and Retirement</p> <p><b>Communication/Interpersonal*</b></p> <p>PA143 Customer Service Training</p> <p>PK146 Job Savvy: Skills for Workplace Success</p> <p>PK159 Drafting Correspondence</p>	<p><b>Office Management</b></p> <p>PK209 Career Builders: Communication Skills</p> <p>PA375 ILMS Ariba Requester (distance learning)</p> <p><b>Communication/Interpersonal*</b></p> <p>PK240 Effective Speaking and Listening Skills</p>

	Recommended Courses	Suggested Courses
<b>Basic Level</b>	<p><b>Leadership and Management**</b>            PK305 Managing Up for Office Support Professionals: Working Effectively with Your Supervisor            PT129 Team Building</p> <p><b>Information Technology*</b>            PS218 OpenNet Plus and the Internet            PS432 MS Word 2003 Level One            PS498 Intro to MS Outlook 2003</p>	<p><b>Leadership and Management**</b>            PT251 Productively Managing Stress</p> <p><b>Information Technology*</b>            PS440 MS PowerPoint 2003 Level One            PS450 MS Access 2003 Level One            PS470 MS Excel 2003 Level One</p> <p>Take some distance learning courses through FSI's FasTrac Program. For a course catalog or to enroll, visit <a href="http://fsi.state.gov/fastrac">http://fsi.state.gov/fastrac</a> on the OpenNet.</p> <p><b>Suggested Developmental Activities</b></p> <p>Attend staff meetings and briefings</p> <p>Read your Bureau Performance Plan</p> <p>Read professional journals and magazines</p> <p>Visit the FSI website to learn about formal training opportunities</p> <p>Visit the Career Development Resource Center</p> <p>Attend Career Development Resource Center workshops and video presentations</p> <p>Participate in the Civil Service Mentoring Program or seek out a mentor</p> <p>As time permits:</p> <p>Attend lectures in the local area on professionally relevant topics</p> <p>Participate in activities of professional non-profit societies and associations</p> <p>Go on informal visits with your supervisor to meet counterparts in other agencies/ organizations</p>

\*Employees who are located outside of the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area may find it more cost effective to take equivalent courses from the Graduate School, USDA, colleges or universities or private vendors in their local area through the FSI External Training Program. Contact the FSI Registrar's Office at (703) 302-7145.

\*\* For a more comprehensive list of courses, see *The Leadership and Management Training Continuum* <http://fsi.state.gov/fsi/lms/docs/LMSContinuum.pdf>.

\*\*\* Distance Learning Courses. For more information, visit <http://fsi.state.gov/fsi/sait/dl.asp>.

## Office Support Professional: Mid-Level

At this level, OSPs are entering a time of accomplishment and transition. You should be knowledgeable about office and Department procedures. You may, however, need to build professional and technical skills that will take you to a more senior level.

It is important for you to collaborate with your supervisors to write an effective IDP or to update an existing one. You should pursue professional development opportunities through appropriate training and by

taking on assignments with increased responsibilities. In addition, you should consider applying for advertised opportunities, such as the USDA Aspiring Leader or New Leader Program and the Civil Service Leadership Competencies Development Initiative.

Career planning is particularly important at this level, when you may want to choose between remaining in the office support profession or moving into other areas, such as budget or human resource management. Here again, the CDRC and the FSI website are excellent resources.

	Recommended Courses	Suggested Courses
<b>Mid-Level</b>  (See also course at earlier levels if not taken yet)	<p><b>Office Management</b> PK206 Civil Service Office Support Professionals Program</p> <p><b>Communication/Interpersonal*</b> PK209 Career Builders: Communication Skills PK240 Effective Speaking and Listening Skills PK241 Writing Effective Letters and Memos PK330 New Ways to Problem Solve</p> <p><b>Leadership and Management**</b> PK305 Managing Up for Office Support Professionals: Working Effectively with Your Supervisor PK216 OMT Seven Habits of Highly Effective People</p> <p><b>Information Technology*</b> PS280 Introduction to MS Project 2000 PS433 MS Word 2003 Level Two</p>	<p><b>Office Management Graduate School, US Department of Agriculture (USDA)</b> Managing Multiple Priorities</p> <p><b>Leadership and Management**</b> PT206 Managing Change PT211 Coaching PT214 Managing Conflict Productively PT251 Productively Managing Stress</p> <p><b>Information Technology*</b> PS441 MS PowerPoint 2003 Level Two PS451 MS Access 2003 Level Two PS471 MS Excel 2003 Level Two PS418 Web Development Fundamentals</p> <p>Take some distance learning courses through FSI's FasTrac Program. For a course catalog or to enroll, visit <a href="http://fsi.state.gov/fastrac">http://fsi.state.gov/fastrac</a> on the OpenNet.</p>

	Recommended Courses	Suggested Courses
<b>Mid-Level</b>  (See also course at earlier levels if not taken yet)	<b>Recommended Rotational Assignments</b>  Bureau Front Office  Bureau Division Office  Assignment length varies according to needs	<b>Suggested Developmental Activities</b>  Apply for a Career Development Program such as the USDA Aspiring or New Leader Programs ****  Apply for an overseas opportunity ****  Read professional journals and magazines  Shadow someone who is working in a position you may wish to move into  Participate in the Civil Service Mentoring Program or seek out a mentor ****  Visit the Career Development Resource Center  As time permits:  Volunteer for a leadership role in a personal or professional capacity  Attend lectures in the local area on professionally relevant topics  Participate in activities of professional non-profit societies and associations  Go on informal visits with your supervisor to meet counterparts in other agencies/organizations

\*Employees who are located outside of the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area may find it more cost effective to take equivalent courses from the Graduate School, USDA, colleges or universities or private vendors in their local area through the FSI External Training Program. Contact the FSI Registrar's Office at (703) 302-7145.

\*\* For a more comprehensive list of courses, see *The Leadership and Management Training Continuum* <http://fsi.state.gov/fsi/lms/docs/LMSContinuum.pdf>. Please note that PK245, Basic Leadership Skills, is a mandatory course for GS-13 employees.

\*\*\* Distance Learning Courses. For more information, visit <http://fsi.state.gov/fsi/sait/dl.asp>.

\*\*\*\* More information follows after this section on *Training for Specific Series and Job Functions*

## Office Support Professional: Senior Level

Senior level OSPs usually have mastered the technical aspects of their positions, so they should focus increasingly on courses that develop their leadership, management, and interpersonal skills. As in all career stages, it is essential to continue assessing

individual plans and goals, and to use on-the-job assignments to build skills that increase professional opportunities. Networking and mentoring skills are also important to success, both for current positions and for promotion potential. In addition, OSPs should review their IDPs and include any recommended courses not yet taken.

	Recommended Courses	Suggested Courses
<b>Senior Level</b>  (See also course at earlier levels if not taken yet)	<p><b>Communication/Interpersonal*</b> Courses not taken at the mid-level as desired</p> <p><b>Leadership and Management**</b> PT224 Influence By Design PT251 Productively Managing Stress</p> <p><b>Information Technology*</b> Courses not taken at the mid-level as desired</p>	<p><b>Office Management</b></p> <p><b>Graduate School, US Department of Agriculture (USDA)</b> Project Management for the Office Professional</p> <p><b>Communication/Interpersonal*</b></p> <p><b>Graduate School, US Department of Agriculture (USDA)</b> Editing for Impact Clear Writing Through Critical Thinking Writing for Results</p> <p>Courses not taken at the mid-level as desired</p> <p><b>Leadership and Management**</b> PT212 Creative Problem Solving PT217 Running Effective Meetings Workshop</p> <p><b>Information Technology*</b> Courses not taken at the mid-level as desired</p> <p>Take some distance learning courses through FSI's FasTrac Program. For a course catalog or to enroll, visit <a href="http://fsi.state.gov/fastrac">http://fsi.state.gov/fastrac</a> on the OpenNet.</p>

	Recommended Courses	Suggested Courses
<b>Senior Level</b>  (See also course at earlier levels if not taken yet)	<b>Recommended Rotational Assignments</b>  Bureau Front Office  Assignment length varies according to needs	<b>Suggested Developmental Activities</b>  Assist with a Secretarial, Presidential, or First Lady visit to a foreign country  Apply for an overseas opportunity***  Volunteer for a Departmental Task Force  Be a mentor***

\*Employees who are located outside of the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area may find it more cost effective to take equivalent courses from the Graduate School, USDA, colleges or universities or private vendors in their local area through the FSI External Training Program. Contact the FSI Registrar's Office at (703) 302-7145.

\*\* For a more comprehensive list of courses, see *The Leadership and Management Training Continuum* <http://fsi.state.gov/fsi/lms/docs/LMSContinuum.pdf>. Please note that PT207, Intermediate Leadership Skills, is a mandatory course for GS-14 employees. PT210, Advanced Leadership Skills, is a mandatory course for GS-15 employees.

\*\*\* More information follows after this section on *Training for Specific Series and Job Functions*.